

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH  
APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016

SPEECH OF

**HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 19, 2015*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2250) making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes:

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chair, I rise in reluctant support of H.R. 2250, a bill to fund the operations of the U.S. House of Representatives for 2016 and for other purposes.

In these times of needed fiscal discipline, everyone must do their part. We are bound by funding caps and, though the president has put forward a blueprint to address sequestration, the Republican leadership has chosen to disregard the plan. As a result, appropriators have produced a bill that makes deep cuts to agencies and programs that support the legislative branch when compared to the president's request.

H.R. 2250 provides a total of \$3.341 billion for vital House and House affiliated functions as well as for greater Congressional operations. This is a reduction from the president's request of \$200 million. Within the total available funding, \$492.2 million is provided for the Architect of the Capitol which oversees maintenance and repairs of House and Senate office buildings in addition to many other important buildings in the Congressional complex. Excluding Senate items, this is an \$84 million reduction in funding for maintenance of the Capitol Visitor Center, the Capitol Grounds, the Library of Congress and the U.S. Botanical Garden. \$591.4 million is provided in the bill to fund Library of Congress (LOC) operations. In addition to being the repository of the nation's print and recorded media, the LOC serves as the research arm of Congress, helping to inform the legislative debate on Capitol Hill. This bill cuts its funding by \$33 million below the president's request. The bill also reduces funding for the Government Accountability Office (GAO). The GAO functions as the "congressional watchdog" by investigating how federal agencies spend American taxpayer dollars. This bill funds GAO at \$522 million, which is \$31 million less than the president's request. H.R. 2250 does increase funding for the Capitol Police when compared to enacted funding levels, but the increase is actually a \$10 million cut when compared to the president's request.

I believe spending taxpayer dollars carefully should always be a priority of Congress, and seeking ways to reduce government spending should also be a priority. There are funding reductions in the bill that I support, including the pay freeze for Members of Congress. But the American people expect us to make wise cuts. They don't want us cutting for the sake of cutting—especially when vital services may be impacted. The president's budget contained a strategy to address sequestration that would have made many of these cuts unnecessary. I regret that my Republican colleagues chose to ignore it.

HONORING COAST GUARD CAPTAIN  
SAMUEL DUKE WALKER**HON. BRADLEY BYRNE**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 20, 2015*

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the retirement of a great American and my dear friend, Coast Guard Captain Samuel Duke Walker.

Captain Walker has served as Commander of Coast Guard Sector Mobile since July of 2013. Before coming to Southwest Alabama, he served as Chief of Response for the Eighth Coast Guard District, where he also served as the Federal On-Scene Coordinator for the Deepwater Horizon Spill of National Significance Response.

Captain Walker graduated from the U.S. Coast Guard Officer Candidate School in 1987. He is a graduate of Rhode Island College with a degree in Electronic Design, and he also holds a Master of Business Administration degree from the University of South Alabama's South of Business.

During his time with the Coast Guard, Captain Walker has earned many accolades. Captain Walker was promoted to the rank of Captain on July 1, 2008, and he served as President of the Class of 2009 at the National War College. His decorations include the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal, Coast Guard Commendation Medal, Coast Guard Achievement Medal, and Combat Action Ribbon.

Captain Walker has been a leader in the Coast Guard, but he has also been a leader in the local community. Captain Walker has called Mobile home for much of his life, and he is a 2001 graduate and Class President of Leadership Mobile. During a recent boating tragedy in Mobile Bay, Captain Walker acted as a steady leader and reassuring voice to members of the community. It is safe to say that Captain Walker has truly become a member of the Southwest Alabama community.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Captain Walker, his wife, and their three children for their dedicated service to the United States Coast Guard, the Gulf Coast, and the entire nation.

So on behalf of the people of Alabama's First Congressional District, I want to wish Captain Walker all the best in his retirement. We will miss his service to the Coast Guard, but I am happy to know Captain Walker will continue to call Mobile home.

RECOGNIZING THE MARIPOSA  
COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL GRIZZLY  
BAND FOR ITS ACHIEVEMENTS  
AND COMMITMENT TO VET-  
ERANS**HON. TOM MCCLINTOCK**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 20, 2015*

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to rise in recognition of the Mariposa County High School Grizzly Band, which will be performing in the upcoming National Memorial Day Parade.

The Mariposa Grizzly Band brings much pride to a small rural community in the Sierra

Foothills; it serves this community by supporting American veterans at every possible opportunity. This commitment has led the band to perform patriotic music at every Memorial Day service conducted by the local Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6042.

Its participation in this year's Memorial Day Parade is not the first time the Grizzly Band has travelled across the country to showcase its talent. The band's impressive reputation afforded it the opportunity to perform in New York City for the 92nd Annual Veterans Day Parade.

During this school year alone, the Grizzly Band has received first-place recognition for its performance at four separate events. It is no wonder the Grizzlies are so beloved in the foothills—their talents have won a total of thirty-seven first-place awards in the last decade.

Furthermore, the band was the recipient of the GRAMMY Foundation's Signature Schools Enterprise Award. This growing list of accomplishments is evidence of the hard work and dedication of these young men and women.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to welcome the Mariposa County High School Grizzly Band to Washington, DC, and I look forward to hearing of both their future accomplishments and their support of our local veteran community.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 2014-15  
DUBUQUE FIGHTING SAINTS  
SEASON**HON. ROD BLUM**

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 20, 2015*

Mr. BLUM. Mr. Speaker, today I want to congratulate the Dubuque Fighting Saints of the United States Hockey League (USHL) on their successful 2014–2015 season.

The Fighting Saints, led by head coach and general manager Matt Shaw, finished the regular season 36–19–5, resulting in 3rd place in the Eastern Conference and earning them a berth in the playoffs. Goalie Jacob Nehama posted the second lowest GAA in the USHL for the season at 2.31 and forward Brett Boeing completed the season in the top 10 in the league for goals scored with 28 for the year.

The Fighting Saints won the "Cowbell Cup," winning the head to head matchups among the three teams in eastern Iowa, finishing one game ahead of the Waterloo Blackhawks and two games ahead of the Cedar Rapids Roughriders.

The impact of the team extends outside the arena and into the greater Dubuque community. Through the "Live Like a Saint" initiative with Two by Two Character Development, the Saints visit local schools and teach empathy, kindness, respect, responsibility, teamwork, and the importance of physical education to young people.

I would like to extend my sincerest congratulations to the 2014–15 Dubuque Fighting Saints on their successful season and thank them for their charity work in the Dubuque community.

I look forward to cheering them on next year to a championship.